

CDC  
Division of Select Agents and Toxins  
1600 Clifton Road, MS E-79  
Atlanta, GA 30333

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am in favor of the reconstructed 1918 pandemic influenza virus being included in the list of select agents. I also agree with the other commentators that more severe restrictions are necessary on the 1918 flu: that any viral entity or DNA sequence containing material from even on 1918 influenza gene be added to the select agent list and that any work using material from the 1918 influenza virus be done in a BSL 4 laboratory.

However, once these necessary steps are taken we must realize the consequences\*researchers in the United States will become the least able to study the 1918 flu because of the restrictions. Indeed, with the sequence of the 1918 pandemic virus, and methods to reconstruct it publicly available, we must recognize that, if free from restrictions, an intelligent and motivated high school student will probably be able to make the virus for themselves. Thus, to insure that there be sufficient research on the 1918 pandemic virus, a program must be put in place and vigorously supported to allow scientists to visit laboratories studying the virus and make contributions to understanding and combating the pandemic virus.

I have recently noted (Medical Hypotheses 2005; 65: 627-628) that blood should be drawn from 1918 influenza survivors and plasma and cells saved with modern methods with the hope that antibodies and/or cells from 1918 survivors might be of therapeutic utility should the 1918 virus reappear. With the recent sequencing and reconstruction of the 1918 pandemic virus, and recent H5N1 and H7N1 bird flu viruses, blood from 1918 flu survivors becomes of even more use and should be obtained before time robs us of this invaluable and unique resource: For example, (1) human anti-1918 pandemic virus can be compared with mouse anti-reconstructed 1918 virus to further verify the validity of the reconstructed virus, and (2) human anti-1918 pandemic virus antibodies can be compared with antibodies from human survivors of the recent H5N1 and H7N1 bird flu viruses to help assess the recent contention of the relatedness of the 1918 virus to the bird flu viruses.

Sincerely,

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